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Front Page | Edit Page | Other Page

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State Council on Human Relations Will Face Financial Crisis in 1968

Like its companion councils in 22 other Southern states, the Arkansas Council on Human Relations will face a financial crisis at the end of 1968.

The Southern Regional Council of Atlanta, which has been providing annual grants-in-aid to the state councils, plans to cease doing so at that time. The annual grant to the Arkansas Council has been $10,000—almost a third of the group's operating budget.

Members of the Arkansas Council were notified of the situation in the October issue of the Council's newsletter. Elijah Coleman, executive director, said the SRC, at a meeting of Council directors at Gatlinburg, Tenn., last month, "suggested that general grant-in-aid funds to the state councils from the Southern Regional Council be discontinued after December 31, 1968."

Coleman said the reason was that the private foundations that had been supporting the SRC were no longer willing to give general grants-in-aid and felt that the councils had been established long enough to go it alone. He said the SRC would continue to fund specific projects of the state councils.

"Where would this leave the Arkansas Council on Human Relations?" Coleman asked. "Simply, it would mean that the state office budget would be cut by some $10,000. This would seriously handicap organizing activities and programming to local affiliates. Also, this would mean that ACHR would need an additional 2,500 members just to keep our present pace of activities."

Arkansas Council Organized in 1954

The Arkansas Council was formed in 1954. It has approximately 1,200 members and has affiliate organizations in Conway, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Pine Bluff, Little Rock, North Little Rock, El Dorado, Forrest City, Wynne, Camden and Jonesboro. A full-time staff concentrates on the problems of Negroes in employment, education, housing, welfare, and voting.

Rev. Walter B. Clancy, chairman of the Arkansas Council's Board of Directors, said, "There is very definitely no danger of the Council's going out of business.

"We're the only interracial group working in the state, and the only group besides the NAACP working in civil rights in the state. We're going to continue, but this will force us to spend more of our time organizing and less of our time doing the legwork of civil rights. We'll have to expect local people to redress local problems."

Three Major Sources Of Council Income

Father Clancy said the Arkansas Council had three major sources of income: The annual $10,000 grant from the SRC, a total of about $13,000 in grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and dues from Council members that provide from $7,000 to $10,000 a year.

There are five classes of memberships, Father Clancy said. A full individual membership is $5 a year, an associate membership $2, organizational membership $20, a student membership $1 and a Century Club membership for either individuals or organizations $100.

"We'll have to make up the $10,000 deficit in new memberships," Father Clancy said. He said the absence of crisis conditions in Arkansas and the reluctance of foundations to continue "unending support" of human relations organizations were the major factors in SRC's decision to end its annual grants.

'In 1957, Madness Of Massive Resistance'

Paul Anthony of Atlanta, director of the SRC, said by phone that the SRC subsidized the affiliates in 1954 with the intention of their being financially independent after three years. "However, in 1957 we had the madness of massive resistance," Anthony said, "and all human relations groups became extremely suspect." For this reason, he said, the affiliated councils showed little growth and the SRC devised a policy of grants-in-aid.

"We're not cutting off financial support now," Anthony said. "But according to our own reports, the South is changing a great deal. In effect, the foundations which contribute to us have said they question the unrestricted continuation of general grants." Anthony said the Ford Foundation had given notice that its grants to the SRC would end at the end of 1968.

Esquire Says CIA Provided Funds

By coincidence, the November issue of Esquire magazine contains an allegation that the SRC has received much of its support from the Central Intelligence Agency. A similar charge was made last spring by the syndicated newspaper columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson.

Asked whether that might have anything to do with the sudden crimp in the SRC budget, Anthony said, "Absolutely not." He said the SRC was operating this year on its largest budget ever: $1,250,000.

Anthony said two foundations that have been major contributors to the SRC—the Norman Fund and the New World Foundation—had been called channels of CIA funds but he said nobody had been able to prove that.

The Norman Fund is a prime source of funds for the SRC's Voter Education project, which Rev. Ben Grinage directs for the Arkansas Council. Anthony said he thought it was "ludicrous that the CIA would give money for the registration of Negroes in the South."

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